

# DEPARTMENT OF STATE



OCTOBER 15, 1976

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PRESS CONFERENCE  
BY THE HONORABLE HENRY A. KISSINGER  
SECRETARY OF STATE

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

OCTOBER 15, 1976

PROF. FAIRBANK: Ladies and gentlemen, I am John Fairbank, representing Harvard University.

Harvard has called this press conference and is extremely glad that Secretary Kissinger is able to come here today, because we have an interest in East Asia that we think is absolutely essential to develop in the public interest. The Secretary is helping us in this way at our request. We appreciate it very much. I hope each of you will identify your paper as you ask questions.

Q Mr. Secretary, what is this Administration doing at this moment to secure a final accounting of American servicemen missing in action in Southeast Asia, and also a comment from you on the cooperation of the present government in Viet-Nam on this matter?

A (Secretary Kissinger) We have made it clear to the Government of Viet-Nam that progress towards normalization and progress towards better relations with the United States absolutely depends on an accounting for the missing in action. We are prepared to discuss this with the Vietnamese. We've had diplomatic exchanges in Paris,

and we expect to start some discussions with them in the near future on that subject.

Now, so far, the Vietnamese Government has not been particularly cooperative. They have been feeding out just a few names to influence particular decisions, but we think that as a question of principle we cannot let the Vietnamese Government blackmail American families with an anguish that has been going on for years, in order to do something that they should have done under the Armistice Agreement to begin with.

So we hope that in the future that we will get a complete accounting for the Missing in Action and that will then permit progress towards normalization.

Q Just a follow up on that: Is this Administration prepared to veto the entrance of the Government of Viet Nam into the United Nations until this matter is resolved?

A Well, we have vetoed it before. We have made it clear that we would veto it before, and the President has stated that this is a precondition.

Q Mr. Secretary, how is the State Department responding to Fidel Castro's

statement that his country is cancelling the 1973 Sky-jacking Agreement with the United States?

A First, in my speech to the United Nations I condemned terrorism as an instrument of national policy pursued by any nation, for whatever cause. The United States is not engaged in any activity of this kind, and the charge by Fidel Castro that the United States or its government, or any agency of the government had anything to do with the explosion of that airliner is totally false.

Secondly, we think that it is an act of complete irresponsibility to encourage hijacking at this moment at a time when the -- when one of the biggest of human problems is the taking of hostages that cannot possibly influence political decisions or foreign policy decisions.

And we have stated today, and I repeat again, that we will hold the Cuban Government accountable for any actions that result from their decision.

Q Mr. Kissinger, The Democratic Presidential nominee, Jimmy Carter, says that when it comes to foreign policy that you, in fact, are the President of the United States; in that particular area that you really have the responsibility that President Ford apparently has very little input in foreign policy

matters. Could you respond to that?

A I will respond to that question.

But could I ask you to \_\_\_\_\_ -- in your other questions to leave them out of the partisan areas. You can mention criticisms and ask me to comment on criticisms but don't get me into specific references to personalities.

In this particular case I think I would have to say that this shows that Mr. Carter has more experience as a Governor than at the Federal level.

There is no such thing -- Dean Acheson used to say that there can be a strong President and a strong Secretary of State as long as the Secretary of State knows who is President.

The final decisions are always made by the President. I see the President three or four times a week. I am on the telephone with him constantly. There is no major decision that is taken which is not made by the President.

In the day to day conduct of foreign policy every President has to delegate certain tactical decisions to somebody -- to his Security Advisor, to his Secretary of State -- and that, too, has happened with every

President in the post-war period. President Ford and I have had a very close working relationship and it is in the nature of such a relationship that the points of view of the two partners merge.

But it is always clear who is the senior partner and who is the junior partner.

Q Mr. Secretary, isn't it true that in a sense when President Ford admittedly made a blunder during the second debate with Jimmy Carter on the Eastern European situation, that that indicated that he was not on top of the situation -- that he wasn't aware fully of certain foreign policy issues?

A No. That indicated that under the pressure of a debate he did not make a point as felicitously as he might have made it -- as he has since admitted.

Nobody who knows his record could believe that on this particular issue he did not know exactly what the facts were. He had one thing in mind and he expressed it in a manner that created the wrong impression and he has stated that publicly and has clarified it.

But there was no misapprehension in his mind as to the presence of Soviet divisions in Eastern Europe

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And we have been negotiating for years to reduce the number of those divisions; and he has personally visited three East European countries.

Q Mr. President,

A I appreciate the promotion but -- [Laughter.] there's a constitutional provision against it --

Q Mr. Secretary, what was your reaction to Carter's remarks on the Panama Canal, and has that affected the negotiations in any way?

A Could you leave names out of these questions? [Laughter.]

It has not affected the negotiations which are just on the verge of resuming.

We have stated repeatedly that with respect to the Panama Canal it is not an issue between the United States and Panama. It is an issue of the United States position with respect to the Western Hemisphere and ultimately with respect to all of the new nations in the world.

If there is a consensus in the Western Hemisphere on any point, it is that the existing arrangements in Panama are to be changed. And if the United States

relies simply on the physical assertion of its power -- which we have, and of course we are stronger than Panama -- then we are going to mortgage the possibilities of a more creative relationship in the Western Hemisphere.

So therefore, the problem is whether we can assure access through the Canal -- free and unimpeded access through the Canal -- by arrangements different from those that now exist.

This is the essence of the negotiation and I do not think it helps to make extreme statements in this regard.

Any agreement that we make -- first of all, there's no doubt -- not one line of an agreement exists at this moment. Once a concept of an agreement is agreed to, it will be discussed with the Congress. Once the Treaty exists, it will have to be approved by two thirds of the Senate.

So there is plenty of opportunity for a full debate and it will take an overwhelming majority to pass it. And we believe that the negotiations are in the



national interest and I believe that any President will come to the same conclusion that every President has come to since 1964, namely that these negotiations should be continued and that all possibilities should be explored.

Q Mr. Secretary, could you tell us a little bit about the Southeast Asia Conference and why it is important for you to be meeting with businessmen? Will you give us a little bit of your concept of the role of multinationals in East Asia?

A Well, first of all, I am meeting with this Conference primarily because my friend John Fairbank has asked me to meet with it. And I did not call the Conference nor did I have anything to do with the membership of the Conference.

As I understood it, Harvard is calling a conference of Americans with interests in Asia and attempts to bring that group together with faculty members that have been studying the problems of Asia.

Now I believe that this is an excellent idea. I think that Americans who are active in Asia ought to understand the cultural, political and economic conditions of the area. And I believe that professors

who are studying the area can benefit from some of the practical experiences which some of these corporations and others who are interested in the area have. I have always believed that one of the problems in our society is to bring together those who have an opportunity to reflect about the problems with those who have to be active in the area.

So I have welcomed this opportunity and, as you know, I am speaking OFF THE RECORD. I am not using it to make any public pronouncement. I am doing it to help my former colleagues at Harvard and my old institution to engage in a worthwhile program.

Q Mr. Secretary, could you please tell us if you or President Ford have plans for visiting the new Chinese leader at any time in the near future? And could you also give us your assessment of the kind of relations we are likely to have with the new government?

A There are no plans now for either President Ford or myself to visit China, because while we have no doubt about the election, there is a certain decorum about making plans -- (Laughter) until the results are clear.

It has been more or less an annual event that the Secretary of State would visit China at some point during the year -- and that could happen, although no plans exist now.

There are no plans whatever for the President to visit China. And there is something to be said for perhaps having a return visit at some point, or to meet at some other place.

But this, I think, has to be decided after the election.

As for the impact of changes in leadership on policy, the long term policy of any country, and especially of a country that moves with the care and thoughtfulness of the Peoples Republic of China doesn't depend so much on personalities as on a perception of their interests and of their values.

I think that the basic factors that brought the United States and China into contact with each other are still operating and are likely to continue.

Of course personalities affect the style of diplomacy and may affect how certain things are carried out,

but I do not expect a fundamental change in the relationship and it is too early for us to tell what differences of style might emerge.

Q: Mr. Secretary, in reference to South Africa, why do you refuse so far to meet with key African liberation organizations, particularly the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress? And why do you schedule meetings excluding these legitimate organizations, spokespersons for the African people in Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa?

A Let's separate the liberation movements in Rhodesia - Zimbabwe -- from those in Namibia, for a moment.

When I visited Africa in April, I met with the Presidents of the so-called "front line states". They all felt at the time that the experience of Angola should not be repeated. That is to say, they did not want any of the outside powers to back one particular liberation movement and thereby get a fight started among the liberation movements.

I then agreed with President Nyerere and President Kaunda and President Khama that the United States would not get in touch directly with the liberation movements

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in order to permit the African problems to be dealt with by Africans.

And we agreed to deal with these liberation movements through the front line Presidents, provided that all other countries did the same.

They have seen to it that these liberation movements would not become the plaything of great power rivalry and it is not failure to recognize these movements -- it is, rather, our attempt to insulate the problem from superpower rivalry.

Now that they are going to Geneva, we will of course deal with them and our whole policy has been to put these liberation movements into a position where they could negotiate directly for the future of their own country.

With respect to the liberation movement in Namibia, which is to say SWAPO. I have met with Nujomo and my representatives have met with Nujomo. In that case, we do not have the special conditions of many movements, since as one movement he deals also with Communist countries. And we deal with him and we have recognized him as an important factor -- as a key

factor in the negotiations. In fact we are just now waiting for him to come back to New York from Africa, before I have another meeting with him.

With respect to -- again to the Rhodesian movements-- I want to repeat, we recognize them. We accept them. We do not want to choose among them. That is to say, we want the African presidents and the leaders, themselves, to determine their own relationships but we will recognize them and we support them.

Q Well is it not a fact that the State Department has had a preference for Joshua Nkomo in Zimbabwe?

A That is not a fact.

Q That is not a fact.

A No. Nkomo was recognized by all of the movements as the chief negotiator at the last negotiation, in February, which broke down.

At this moment, we are meticulously staying away from indicating any preference; and when Mr. Schauffele visited Salisbury he was in touch with Muzorewa as well as with Nkomo, as well as with representatives of Mugabe.

Q Mr. Kissinger, on the hijacking question do you feel at this point that these incidents of skyjacking will increase?

And also what can the United States do about it now that Castro has cancelled the arrangement?

A I don't want to speculate what exactly Castro intends to do with this arrangement, and what it means with respect to his actual performance.

Theoretically he could carry out the same obligations, which is to say to return the skyjackers without having the formal obligation to do so.

If he, however, deliberately encourages skyjackings to Cuba, it would be an act of extraordinary irresponsibility, because I think whatever the disputes between countries may be, no country should use the suffering of innocent people who, I repeat, have absolutely no possibility of affecting events for the sort of rivalry that now exists.

Q What can the United States do about that?

A Well, I said we will hold them accountable.

What we will do we will have to study.

Q Dr. Kissinger, because you are returning to help Harvard for the East Asian Conference, would you give any thought to returning to Harvard in any capacity after you leave office?

A Well, this won't be a problem before 1981, so we will have many opportunities to discuss this. (Laughter.)

Q Dr. Kissinger, last night the President said that Jimmy Carter had slandered the name of the United States when he criticized American foreign policy under yourself in the Ford Administration. How far can a Democratic candidate go in his criticism before the President has to go run and hide behind the American flag to defend against it.

A Well, I consider the office of the Secretary of State essentially a non-partisan office; and I think the candidates have to determine for themselves how far they should go and what they can say.

Q Mr. Secretary, in your answers you gave before about staying on until 1981 --

A That was a joke. (Laughter.) That was to



demoralize my staff.

Q Does that mean you are prepared to stay with President Ford if he is re-elected?

A No. I've said repeatedly that eight years is a long time -- especially eight years as turbulent as these have been -- that I did not want to state before the election was over what I would do before the President has talked to me, but that on the whole I thought that eight years is a long time. So I have not made my final decision. I want to wait until the President has talked to me.

Q Mr. Kissinger, aren't you in fact saying you'd prefer to leave, although you will serve at his request if he's re-elected?

A I haven't really stated what I will do because I want to look at it under the conditions that then exist, and I owe the President the opportunity to discuss it with me.

Q Is there any other job you prefer to take?

A No.

Q Mr. Secretary, I'd like to ask you:

Is it true that -- is it possible that recent arms sales by the United States to Israel were motivated by political considerations before the election?

A Well, I think the President has answered this yesterday. These items have been before the Administration for several months. They come up for an almost monthly review. And the President decided to act because he thought, as he pointed out yesterday, that it was in the best interests of the United States.

Q Mr. Secretary, I'd like to follow up on Mr. Krimer's question of before, since you said your answer to that was a joke. Taking for granted that you will at some point leave the State Department, would you at that point consider returning to Harvard? And, if so, have you at any time discussed that possibility with any member of the Harvard administration?

A I haven't discussed it with any member of the Harvard administration, and I have really not given any systematic thought to what I'm going to do when I leave this position. I have taken the view that after I've announced my resignation, or after the voters announce my resignation for me (laughter), I can then make the decision on what I might want to do. But I think it's inappropriate for somebody in my office to discuss his future with anybody until he's resigned.

Q Mr. Kissinger, I understand the United States is investigating the cause of the crash of the Cuban plane off Barbados.

A Yes.

Q Can you tell me who is doing the investigating, what the investigation has learned so far?

A To the best of my information, we have asked the CIA to check into it. I don't know whether the FBI is making a formal investigation of it. We have offered the governments concerned any assistance that they might request since it did not occur on American soil. But I can state categorically that no official of the United States Government -- nobody paid by the American Government, nobody in contact with the American Government -- has had anything to do with this crash of the airliner. We consider actions like this totally reprehensible.

Q Mr. Secretary, speaking of the CIA, the CIA has been accused by some Southeast Asia observers of more or less manipulating the recent military takeover in Thailand. Now, have the United States interests gone so far as to try to emulate the type of military dictatorship

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that was set up in Chile? Are we talking about that topic?

A "Emulate," you mean? We have had absolutely nothing to do with the upheaval in Thailand, and therefore there's no point comparing it with Chile. We had absolutely nothing to do with it. We didn't know about it beforehand.

Q Is Chile still an issue?

A That depends with whom.

Q With the United States, with the recent car blow-up in Washington, D. C.?

A Well, we of course totally condemn the murder of former Ambassador Letelier, whom I knew personally and respected, even when we had our differences. We have seen no evidence yet as to who was behind this assassination. But whoever was behind it, it is an absolutely outrageous act.

We also had nothing to do -- as the Church Committee said -- with the overthrow of the Chilean Government. We had nothing to do with the military junta that overthrew it.

Q Despite some of the evidence to the

contrary?

A The Church Committee made clear that we had nothing to do with the military junta. What we were attempting to do was to strengthen the democratic parties, who in turn had nothing to do with the overthrow for the 1976 election. That was a different matter.

Q Can we say without a doubt that the United States had nothing to do with the recent bombing in Washington, D. C.?

A You mean of Letelier?

Q Exactly.

A Absolutely.

Q Thank you.

Q You mentioned earlier that you're going to consider your fate following the election, and perhaps that fate might be decided by the voters. How much of an impact do you, yourself, feel your performance during the last eight years will have on this election?

A Well, foreign policy is inevitably an issue in any election, and that's inevitable. These have been eight turbulent years. I believe that they were the period in which we had to make the change from a belief

in American omnipotence, in which we could overwhelm every problem with our power, to a period in which we have to conduct foreign policy the way other nations have had to conduct it throughout history -- with a consciousness of a national purpose, a choice of means -- where we have had to establish new relationships with old allies, open new relationships with old adversaries, liquidate vestiges of a war which we found, and deal simultaneously with a revolution that is represented by these new nations.

I don't want to judge myself how effectively all of this has been done, and I don't frankly believe that candidates are in the best position to judge that either -- although, obviously, they must make their cases.

We will leave to history what the ultimate assessment is. But without doubt, an eight-year record in foreign policy will be subject to discussion.

Q Will you be an asset to Gerald Ford on Election Day or a liability?

A I don't go into the public opinion or polling business, and I can't judge it. My obligation is, under the direction of the President, to conduct foreign

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policy and to advise the President as to what I believe to be in the best interests of the United States and world peace.

Now, I understand that most polls show that I have an adequate public support, but this is not the ultimate test of a Secretary of State.

Q Secretary Kissinger, do you think that at some point the United States should or might sell arms to China -- provide any kind of defense equipment to China?

A We have never had any request for the sale of arms to China. We have never had any discussions with China about the sale of arms. We believe that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of China is very important to the world equilibrium, and we would consider it a grave matter if this were threatened by an outside power. But we have never had any defense discussions with China. I don't foresee any, but I do have to state our general view that it would not be taken lightly if there were a massive assault on China.

Q Is it correct, as former Secretary Schlesinger has said, that the State Department withheld invitations for him to visit China?

A I don't believe that Secretary Schlesinger said this, and the only formal invitation to Secretary Schlesinger that was issued happened to coincide with his departure from the Government so that the problem of withholding it did not arise.

Q He said that two invitations were extended previously.

A Well, with respect to the first -- I don't think he said it. I think a member of his party must have misunderstood; there was no formal invitation the year before.

Q Mr. Secretary, if this does turn out to be your last year in office, could you look back and think about what might be the major disappointment and major accomplishment during your period as Secretary of State?

A You know, when you are in this sort of a position, you perform almost like an athlete, in the sense of reacting to the series of situations that develop very rapidly. I would think that I would be much more reflective about it after I'm out of office than while I'm in office. I would think that the major accomplishment would be the attempt to shift American foreign policy from a perception that we could do everything simultaneously



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to an attempt to relate our commitments to our means and our purposes and to our possibilities.

This involved recasting our relationships with allies, developing new relationships with adversaries, and beginning new approaches to the new countries.

The disappointment has been that in the period after 1973, the Executive authority of the United States was so weakened by a series of crises that many of the building blocks that were in place in 1973 could not be used as rapidly as I would have hoped, and that perhaps more energy had to be spent on preserving what existed than on building what might have been possible.

I could list specific things that were disappointing -- as you would expect in an eight-year period -- but if you want it on a general plane, these would be what I consider the accomplishments and what I consider the sadnesses.

Q More specifically, Mr. Kissinger, are you disappointed that the United States did not establish full diplomatic relations with mainland China before Mao Tse-tung's death and that perhaps now this period is going to be a longer period because of the transition that mainland China is going through?

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A I think that the process of normalization is one to which we're committed and which we intend to carry out. I don't think it is tied, nor has it ever been tied by the Chinese, to a personality or to a specific leader. And I believe that that process can continue.

Q When will it be completed, or what's holding it up now?

A Well, what has held it up is to discuss the modalities about the future of Taiwan, which will have to be discussed with the new leadership.

Q Mr. Secretary --

PROF. FAIRBANK: We have a half hour.  
Is there a last question or two?

Q This is the last, bringing you back to something else, Mr. Secretary -- if you don't mind.

A One more.

Q I'll give a scenario to you. Suppose that you do get your walking papers from the electorate in November. You say you don't know what job you're going to take. But most of us, I think, would concede in all probability you will receive an offer to write your memoirs or write a book on your eight years.

On balance, given equal office space and background, would you rather write that on the banks of the Potomac or the banks of the Charles? (Laughter.)

A Almost certainly not on the banks of the Potomac. (Laughter.) Where else, I don't know, but almost certainly not on the banks of the Potomac.

Q Mr. Secretary --

A You'll get the last question. Go ahead. You ask a question and let this lady speak.

No -- you go ahead. You ask your question first.

Q O.K. Recently I have read that Mexico was going to Communism, quoting from one declaration of one of the Senators of the United States.

What is your point of view about that? Do you think Mexico is really going to the Communists?

A Absolutely not. I know Mexico a little. I know its leaders very well. I know its incumbent President well. I know the President-elect well.

Of course, Mexico is given to heroic rhetoric, which may not always be literally understood in the United States (laughter) -- but Mexico is not going towards Communism, and I know no leader in Mexico who has any Communist biases, though, of course, the Mexican revolution produces a certain sympathy for Third World causes

and inevitably when a country has as powerful a neighbor as the United States, there are going to be many points of friction. But the fact is we usually solve our points of friction. And we have repeatedly rejected this accusation that has been made by several Congressmen and Senators.

Q Thank you.

A Now this lady has the last question.

Q A few minutes ago you said that public opinion polls are not the ultimate test for a Secretary of State.

A Of a Secretary of State.

Q Yes. If they are not, what is the ultimate test?

A I think the ultimate test of a Secretary of State -- the obligation of a Secretary of State is to give his best judgment to the President as to what is in the national interest. And if he is responsible, he'll understand that the national interest cannot be separated from the world interest. The President then has to make the political decision as to how this judgment can be carried out within the American political context. It's the President who has to make that decision.

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I don't think a Secretary of State should take his own public opinion polls as to his own popularity. The Secretary of State ought to be expendable and usually is expended (laughter), but he should not worry about his own popularity primarily. He should advise the President. Then the President has to make the judgment. And eventually he'll be judged by history and whether he's left the world somewhat more peaceful and perhaps more progressive than he found it.

A Thank you very much.

PROF. FAIRBANK: Thank you.

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## Secretary Kissinger's News Conference at Harvard October 15

*Following is the transcript of a news conference held by Secretary Kissinger on October 15 at Cambridge, Mass., where he participated in the Harvard East Asia Conference.*

Press release 518 dated October 15

**Professor Fairbank:** Ladies and gentlemen, I am John Fairbank, representing Harvard University.

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**Q. Mr. Secretary, what is this Administration doing at this moment to secure a final accounting of American servicemen missing in action in Southeast Asia, and also a comment from you on the cooperation of the present government in Vietnam on this matter?**

**Secretary Kissinger:** We have made it clear to the Government of Vietnam that progress toward normalization and progress toward better relations with the United States absolutely depend on an accounting for the missing in action. We are prepared to discuss this with the Vietnamese. We've had diplomatic exchanges in Paris, and we expect to start some discussions with them in the near future on that subject.

Now, so far, the Vietnamese Government has not been particularly cooperative. They have been feeding out just a few names to influence particular decisions. But we think

that as a question of principle we cannot let the Vietnamese Government blackmail American families with an anguish that has been going on for years in order to do something that they should have done under the armistice agreement to begin with.

So we hope that in the future that we will get a complete accounting for the missing in action, and that will then permit progress toward normalization.

**Q. Just a followup on that: Is this Administration prepared to veto the entrance of the Government of Vietnam into the United Nations until this matter is resolved?**

**Secretary Kissinger:** Well, we have vetoed it before. We have made it clear that we would veto it before, and the President has stated that this is a precondition.

### Cuba's Statement on Hijacking Agreement

**Q. Mr. Secretary, how is the State Department responding to Fidel Castro's statement [on Oct. 15] that his country is canceling the 1973 skyjacking agreement with the United States?**

**Secretary Kissinger:** First, in my speech to the United Nations I condemned terrorism as an instrument of national policy pursued by any nation, for whatever cause. The United States is not engaged in any activity of this kind, and the charge by Fidel Castro that the United States or its government or any agency of the government had anything to do with the explosion of that airliner is totally false.

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jacking at this moment at a time when the —when one of the biggest of human problems is the taking of hostages that cannot possibly influence political decisions or foreign policy decisions.

And we have stated today, and I repeat again, that we will hold the Cuban Government accountable for any actions that result from their decision.

*Q. Mr. Kissinger, the Democratic Presidential nominee, Jimmy Carter, says that when it comes to foreign policy that you, in fact, are the President of the United States in that particular area, that you really have the responsibility, that President Ford apparently has very little input in foreign policy matters. Could you respond to that?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* I will respond to that question. But could I ask you to—in your other questions to leave them out of the partisan areas. You can mention criticisms and ask me to comment on criticisms, but don't get me into specific references to personalities. In this particular case I think I would have to say that this shows that Mr. Carter has more experience as a Governor than at the Federal level.

There is no such thing—Dean Acheson used to say that there can be a strong President and a strong Secretary of State as long as the Secretary of State knows who is President.

The final decisions are always made by the President. I see the President three or four times a week. I am on the telephone with him constantly. There is no major decision that is taken which is not made by the President.

In the day-to-day conduct of foreign policy every President has to delegate certain tactical decisions to somebody—to his security adviser, to his Secretary of State—and that, too, has happened with every President in the postwar period. President Ford and I have had a very close working relationship, and it is in the nature of such a relationship that the points of view of the two partners merge.

But it is always clear who is the senior partner and who is the junior partner.

*Q. Mr. Secretary, isn't it true that in a sense when President Ford admittedly made a blunder during the second debate with Jimmy Carter on the Eastern European situation, that that indicated that he was not on top of the situation, that he wasn't aware fully of certain foreign policy issues?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* No. That indicated that under the pressure of a debate he did not make a point as felicitously as he might have made it, as he has since admitted.

Nobody who knows his record could believe that on this particular issue he did not know exactly what the facts were. He had one thing in mind and he expressed it in a manner that created the wrong impression, and he has stated that publicly and has clarified it.

But there was no misapprehension in his mind as to the presence of Soviet divisions in Eastern Europe. And we have been negotiating for years to reduce the number of those divisions. And he has personally visited three East European countries.

*Q. Mr. President—*

*Secretary Kissinger:* I appreciate the promotion, but [laughter] there's a constitutional provision against it.

#### Negotiating New Panama Canal Arrangements

*Q. Mr. Secretary, what was your reaction to Carter's remarks on the Panama Canal, and has that affected the negotiations in any way?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* Could you leave names out of these questions? [Laughter.]

It has not affected the negotiations, which are just on the verge of resuming.

We have stated repeatedly that with respect to the Panama Canal it is not an issue between the United States and Panama. It is an issue of the U.S. position with respect to the Western Hemisphere and ultimately

with respect to all of the new nations in the world.

If there is a consensus in the Western Hemisphere on any point, it is that the existing arrangements in Panama are to be changed. And if the United States relies simply on the physical assertion of its power—which we have, and of course we are stronger than Panama—then we are going to mortgage the possibilities of a more creative relationship in the Western Hemisphere.

So therefore the problem is whether we can assure access through the canal, free and unimpeded access through the canal, by arrangements different from those that now exist.

This is the essence of the negotiation, and I do not think it helps to make extreme statements in this regard.

Any agreement that we make—first of all, there's no doubt—not one line of an agreement exists at this moment. Once a concept of an agreement is agreed to, it will be discussed with the Congress. Once the treaty exists, it will have to be approved by two-thirds of the Senate.

So there is plenty of opportunity for a full debate, and it will take an overwhelming majority to pass it. And we believe that the negotiations are in the national interest, and I believe that any President will come to the same conclusion that every President has come to since 1964; namely, that these negotiations should be continued and that all possibilities should be explored.

*Q. Mr. Secretary, could you tell us a little bit about the East Asia Conference and why it is important for you to be meeting with businessmen? Will you give us a little bit of your concept of the role of multinationals in East Asia?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* Well, first of all, I am meeting with this conference primarily because my friend John Fairbank has asked me to meet with it. And I did not call the

conference, nor did I have anything to do with the membership of the conference.

As I understood it, Harvard is calling a conference of Americans with interests in Asia and attempting to bring that group together with faculty members that have been studying the problems of Asia.

Now, I believe that this is an excellent idea. I think that Americans who are active in Asia ought to understand the cultural, political, and economic conditions of the area. And I believe that professors who are studying the area can benefit from some of the practical experiences which some of these corporations and others who are interested in the area have. I have always believed that one of the problems in our society is to bring together those who have an opportunity to reflect about the problems with those who have to be active in the area.

So I have welcomed this opportunity and, as you know, I am speaking off the record. I am not using it to make any public pronouncement. I am doing it to help my former colleagues at Harvard and my old institution to engage in a worthwhile program.

#### Impact of Change of Leadership in China

*Q. Mr. Secretary, could you please tell us if you or President Ford have plans for visiting the new Chinese leader at any time in the near future? And could you also give us your assessment of the kind of relations we are likely to have with the new government?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* There are no plans now for either President Ford or myself to visit China, because while we have no doubt about the election, there is a certain decorum about making plans [laughter] until the results are clear.

It has been more or less an annual event that the Secretary of State would visit China at some point during the year, and that could happen, although no plans exist now.

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*Q. That is not a fact?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* No. Nkomo was recognized by all of the movements as the chief negotiator at the last negotiation, in February, which broke down.

At this moment, we are meticulously staying away from indicating any preference. And when Mr. Schauffele [Assistant Secretary for African Affairs William E. Schauffele, Jr.] visited Salisbury he was in touch with [Bishop Abel] Muzorewa as well as with Nkomo, as well as with representatives of [Robert] Mugabe.

#### Aircraft Hijacking

*Q. Mr. Kissinger, on the hijacking question, do you feel at this point that these incidents of skyjacking will increase? And also, what can the United States do about it now that Castro has canceled the arrangement?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* I don't want to speculate what exactly Castro intends to do with this arrangement and what it means with respect to his actual performance.

Theoretically he could carry out the same obligations, which is to say to return the skyjackers without having the formal obligation to do so. If he, however, deliberately encourages skyjackings to Cuba, it would be an act of extraordinary irresponsibility. Because I think whatever the disputes between countries may be, no country should use the suffering of innocent people who, I repeat, have absolutely no possibility of affecting events for the sort of rivalry that now exists.

*Q. What can the United States do about that?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* Well, I said we will hold them accountable. What we will do we will have to study.

*Q. Dr. Kissinger, because you are returning to help Harvard for the East Asia Conference, would you give any thought to returning to Harvard in any capacity after you leave office?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* Well, this won't be a problem before 1981, so we will have many opportunities to discuss this. [Laughter.]

*Q. Dr. Kissinger, last night the President said that Jimmy Carter had slandered the name of the United States when he criticized American foreign policy under yourself in the Ford Administration. How far can a Democratic candidate go in his criticism before the President has to go run and hide behind the American flag to defend against it?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* Well, I consider the office of the Secretary of State essentially a nonpartisan office, and I think the candidates have to determine for themselves how far they should go and what they can say.

*Q. Mr. Secretary, in your answers you gave before about staying on until 1981—*

*Secretary Kissinger:* That was a joke. [Laughter.] That was to demoralize my staff.

*Q. Does that mean you are prepared to stay with President Ford if he is reelected?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* No. I've said repeatedly that eight years is a long time—especially eight years as turbulent as these have been—that I did not want to state before the election was over what I would do before the President has talked to me, but that on the whole I thought that eight years is a long time. So I have not made my final decision. I want to wait until the President has talked to me.

*Q. Mr. Kissinger, aren't you in fact saying you'd prefer to leave, although you will serve at his request if he's reelected?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* I haven't really stated what I will do, because I want to look at it under the conditions that then exist and I owe the President the opportunity to discuss it with me.

*Q. Is there any other job you prefer to take?*

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*Secretary Kissinger:* No.

*Q. Mr. Secretary, I'd like to ask you, is it true that—is it possible that recent arms sales by the United States to Israel were motivated by political considerations before the election?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* Well, I think the President has answered this yesterday. These items have been before the Administration for several months. They come up for an almost monthly review. And the President decided to act because he thought, as he pointed out yesterday, that it was in the best interests of the United States.

*Q. Mr. Secretary, I'd like to follow up on Mr. Krimer's question of before, since you said your answer to that was a joke. Taking for granted that you will at some point leave the State Department, would you at that point consider returning to Harvard? And if so, have you at any time discussed that possibility with any member of the Harvard administration?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* I haven't discussed it with any member of the Harvard administration, and I have really not given any systematic thought to what I'm going to do when I leave this position. I have taken the view that after I've announced my resignation, or after the voters announce my resignation for me [laughter], I can then make the decision on what I might want to do. But I think it's inappropriate for somebody in my office to discuss his future with anybody until he's resigned.

*Q. Mr. Kissinger, I understand the United States is investigating the cause of the crash of the Cuban plane off Barbados.*

*Secretary Kissinger:* Yes.

*Q. Can you tell me who is doing the investigating, what the investigation has learned so far?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* To the best of my information, we have asked the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] to check into it.

I don't know whether the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] is making a formal investigation of it.

We have offered the governments concerned any assistance that they might request, since it did not occur on American soil. But I can state categorically that no official of the U.S. Government, nobody paid by the American Government, nobody in contact with the American Government, has had anything to do with this crash of the airliner. We consider actions like this totally reprehensible.

#### The Issue of Chile

*Q. Mr. Secretary, speaking of the CIA, the CIA has been accused by some Southeast Asia observers of more or less manipulating the recent military takeover in Thailand. Now, have the U.S. interests gone so far as to try to emulate the type of military dictatorship that was set up in Chile? Are we talking about that topic?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* "Emulate," you mean? We have had absolutely nothing to do with the upheaval in Thailand, and therefore there's no point comparing it with Chile. We had absolutely nothing to do with it. We didn't know about it beforehand.

*Q. Is Chile still an issue?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* That depends with whom.

*Q. With the United States, with the recent car blowup in Washington, D.C.?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* Well, we of course totally condemn the murder of former Ambassador [of Chile to the U.S. Orlando] Letelier, whom I knew personally and respected even when we had our differences. We have seen no evidence yet as to who was behind this assassination. But whoever was behind it, it is an absolutely outrageous act.

We also had nothing to do—as the

Church committee [Senate Select Committee To Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities] said—with the overthrow of the Chilean Government. We had nothing to do with the military junta that overthrew it.

*Q. Despite some of the evidence to the contrary?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* The Church committee made clear that we had nothing to do with the military junta. What we were attempting to do was to strengthen the democratic parties, who in turn had nothing to do with the overthrow, for the 1976 election. That was a different matter.

*Q. Can we say without a doubt that the United States had nothing to do with the recent bombing in Washington, D.C.?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* You mean of Letelier?

*Q. Exactly.*

*Secretary Kissinger:* Absolutely.

*Q. Thank you.*

*Q. You mentioned earlier that you're going to consider your fate following the election, and perhaps that fate might be decided by the voters. How much of an impact do you yourself feel your performance during the last eight years will have on this election?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* Well, foreign policy is inevitably an issue in any election, and that's inevitable. These have been eight turbulent years. I believe that they were the period in which we had to make the change from a belief in American omnipotence, in which we could overwhelm every problem with our power, to a period in which we have had to conduct foreign policy the way other nations have had to conduct it throughout history—with a consciousness of a national purpose, a choice of means—where we have had to establish new relationships with old allies, open new relationships with old adversaries, liquidate vestiges of a war which we found,

and deal simultaneously with a revolution that is represented by the new nations.

I don't want to judge myself how effectively all of this has been done, and I don't frankly believe that candidates are in the best position to judge that either, although obviously they must make their cases.

We will leave to history what the ultimate assessment is. But without doubt, an eight-year record in foreign policy will be subject to discussion.

*Q. Will you be an asset to Gerald Ford on election day, or a liability?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* I don't go into the public opinion or polling business, and I can't judge it. My obligation is, under the direction of the President, to conduct foreign policy and to advise the President as to what I believe to be in the best interests of the United States and world peace.

Now, I understand that most polls show that I have an adequate public support, but this is not the ultimate test of a Secretary of State.

#### China and World Equilibrium

*Q. Secretary Kissinger, do you think that at some point the United States should or might sell arms to China, provide any kind of defense equipment to China?*

*Secretary Kissinger:* We have never had any request for the sale of arms to China. We have never had any discussions with China about the sale of arms.

We believe that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of China is very important to the world equilibrium, and we would consider it a grave matter if this were threatened by an outside power. But we have never had any defense discussions with China. I don't foresee any, but I do have to state our general view that it would not be taken lightly if there were a massive assault on China.

*Q. Is it correct, as former Secretary [of Defense James R.] Schlesinger has said, that*

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